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## Idaho & Western Montana



### David Trochlell

The Region's cool, wet spring gradually gave way to a very warm and dry summer. The last two weeks of the season were especially torrid, making it the second warmest July ever recorded. The wet spring may have played a role in speculations about delayed or even absent breeding birds, but for the most part observers witnessed a very successful nesting season.

**Abbreviation:** Camas (Camas N.W.R., Jefferson, ID); latilong (area encompassed by one degree latitude and one degree longitude used in mapping bird distribution in both Idaho and Montana).

### CORMORANT THROUGH DICKCISSEL

Two pairs of Double-crested Cormorants with nestlings at Coeur d'Alene L., Kootenai 8 Jul (DJ) furnished n. Idaho's 3rd breeding record. A Great Egret wandered to Ravalli, MT 14 Jun (WT), where they are increasingly reported. Representing the first latilong record in a decade was a Snowy Egret in Lake, MT 5 Jun (JG). A flurry of spring Glossy Ibis reports in e. Idaho ended with singles in Jefferson 3 Jun

(CW) and Bingham 27 Jun (SK). Only one previous report of Glossy Ibis existed for Idaho before 2006. Well documented were 2 White-rumped Sandpipers in Fremont 1 Jun (JC, †ph. CW), Idaho's 4th record. Both geographically and seasonally unusual was a Stilt Sandpiper in Nez Perce, ID 4 Jun (CS). Apparently high water levels at four s. Idaho reservoirs created exceptional conditions for Caspian Tern breeding, with 85 nests tallied 25 Jun–5 Jul (CT).

A White-winged Dove was near Rexburg, ID 4 Jun (ph. DCI, †CW); there are about five previous reports for the state. Eurasian Collared-Doves at new Idaho locations included 2 in Nampa 4 Jun (JH), one in Kootenai 7 Jun (SJ), and 3 in Hailey 16 Jun (PWP). Montana's share included a pair in Manhattan 11-19 Jun and one at Gallatin Gateway 26 Jun (EH). A Black-billed Cuckoo near Harrison, MT 24 Jun (SB) furnished just the 3rd local record in 15 years. Exciting news anywhere in the lower 48 states was a tally of six nesting pairs of Northern Hawk Owl with young in Glacier N.P., MT 12 Jun (GM); they were first discovered breeding there just last year. The discovery of a Black Swift with a nestling in Glacier N.P. 27 Jul (DC) represented Montana's first confirmed nesting in 44 years. A wayward White-throated Swift near Post Falls Dam 17 Jun (MH) was only the 2nd county record. A Broad-tailed Hummingbird at Silver Gate, MT 15 Jun (EH) provided a new location for this species and was only the 2nd report in Latilong 40C.

Alder Flycatchers were noted in Glacier N.P. 10-13 Jun (GM) and w. of Kalispell 13 Jun (DC). With only about three previous Idaho reports, Eastern Phoebes in Bonner 28 May–2 Jun (RB, m.ob.) and Blaine 10 Jun (JC) were significant. Especially notable in summer was a Blue Jay in Manhattan, MT 16 Jun (EH). Single Idaho Northern Mockingbirds were noted in Fremont 8 Jun (CW), at Craters

of the Moon N.M. 9 Jun (MM), and in Blaine 13 Jun (KC). An Ovenbird was at Camas 3 Jun (JC, CW), the most consistent location for this rare-but-annual migrant. If accepted by the Idaho B.R.C., a Scarlet Tanager at Camas 3 Jun (JC, †CW) will likely provide a 3rd state record. The only reported Rose-breasted Grosbeak was in Dillon, MT 1 Jun (SSh). Black-throated Sparrows strayed n. of their traditional range in Idaho: singles were noted in Idaho 13 Jun (ph. LL) and Jefferson 25 Jun (SK). The only Great-tailed Grackle reports were from Idaho's Oneida 3 Jul and Twin Falls 10 Jul (BO). If accepted, a Dickcissel in Ashton 30 Jun–1 Jul (DE, ph., DCI, †CW) will furnish Idaho's first record.

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Rick Fridell

There is typically a lull in activity during June and July in the Great Basin, with few birds and even fewer birders on the move. This season was particularly uneventful in the Region, with continuing low rainfall and higher-than-average temperatures. Wildfires continued throughout much of the Region this summer, following on last year's record-setting fire season. The cycle of wildfires, followed by the spread of invasive exotic grasses leading to more and larger fires, is resulting in landscape-level habitat changes, particularly in the Mojave Desert portions of Utah and Nevada. Avian highlights were few and far between this summer, with the notable exception of Utah's first Glossy Ibis records.

Abbreviations: Antelope I. (Antelope Island S.P. and Causeway, Davis, UT); Bear R. (Bear River Migratory Bird Refuge, Box Elder, UT); Corn Cr. (Corn Creek Unit, Desert N.W.R., Clark, NV); H.B.V.P. (Henderson Bird Viewing Preserve, Clark, NV); L. Mead (Lake Mead N.R.A., Clark, NV); Lytle (Lytle Ranch Preserve, Washington, UT); Miller's R.A. (Miller's Rest Area, Esmeralda, NV); Ouray (Ouray N.W.R., Uintah, UT); Red Hills (Red Hills G.C., St. George, Washington, UT); Zion (Zion N.P., Washington, UT).

## WATERFOWL THROUGH IBIS

Reports of unexpected waterfowl species spending the summer season at strange locales were more than usual this year. A Ross's Goose spent a hot summer on a pond at the St. George G.C., Washington, UT (1 Jun+; RF). Lone Common Goldeneyes lingered at L. Mojave, Clark, NV (SP et al.) and the Springdale Pond, Washington, UT (CS et al.) throughout the season. Even more surprising was a male Barrow's Goldeneye that spent the summer at Lemmon Valley, Washoe, NV (J&GA, SM et al.). An ad. male Red-breasted Merganser was photographed 25 Jun at Willard Bay S.P., Box Elder, UT (SB). Following a rise in sightings in recent years throughout the West, Utah's first Glossy Ibis were documented this peri-

od. At least 3 were observed in Jun; the first 2 were found near Benson, Cache Valley, Cache, UT 5-18 Jun (acc., †RR, †J&KB, †DW, LW et al.), with another photographed at Bear R. 24-25 Jun (acc.; ph., †JB, DG et al.). The species is spreading westward rapidly, with most w. states now boasting multiple records.

## HAWKS THROUGH WOODPECKERS

The only significant raptor sighting was a Zone-tailed Hawk observed 14 Jul near Silver Reef, Washington, UT (SCa). Although there were fewer shorebird sightings than normal, there were a few notable observations, including a Whimbrel photographed 24 Jul at Antelope I. (PH), a Hudsonian Godwit reported with limited details 3 Jul at Logan, Cache, UT (p.a., BR, CR, JR), and early Semipalmated Sandpipers 25 Jul at Glover Ponds, Davis, UT (KP, SCo) and 31 Jul at H.B.V.P. (JBr). A second-year Sabine's Gull observed 26 Jul at Farmington Bay W.M.A., Davis, UT (SCo, BHu) was also much earlier than expected. Least Terns were found at J.W. Fitzgerald W.M.A., Tooele, UT (11 Jun; †J&KB) and H.B.V.P. (15 Jun; TL).

Unusually high owl counts included 44 Burrowing Owls 29 Jul at Antelope I. (S&CS) and an incredible 63 Short-eared Owls along a 29-km stretch of road through Curlew Valley, Box Elder, UT (1-17 Jun; KP, A&LS). Anna's Hummingbirds continue to expand their range northward in the Region; an ad. male was observed in nw. Reno, Washoe, NV 26 Jul (FP). A Pileated Woodpecker, a species with very limited range in the Region, was observed 23 Jun along the e. shore of L. Tahoe, Washoe, NV (RSt, DGh).

## FLYCATCHERS THROUGH WARBLERS

An Eastern Kingbird was a nice find at Porter Springs, Pershing, NV 4 Jun (F&GP, DM) and furnished the only flycatcher report of note. Purple Martins are rarely reported migrants through the s. portion of the Region, so a female observed 2 Jun at H.B.V.P. (JBr) was noteworthy. An intriguing report of a singing Winter Wren 8 Jul came from Millcreek Canyon, Salt Lake, UT (CN). Although nesting by this species has not been documented in Utah, there are increasing numbers of summer records that may warrant investigation. A female Varied Thrush along Snake Cr. Pass Trail, Brighton, Salt Lake, UT 23 Jul (J&KB) was unexpected. A wayward Gray Catbird was at Porter Springs, Pershing, NV 10 Jun (FP et al.), and a suspected nesting pair of Gray Catbirds near Great Basin N.P., White Pine, NV (22 Jun-8 Jul) was observed displaying and carrying nesting material (MR, JF). Northern Mockingbirds are seldom reported in n. Nevada, so an individual observed 1 Jul in Pleas-

ant Valley, Humboldt was somewhat unexpected (HP). A pair of Northern Mockingbirds nested twice in a nw. Reno, Washoe, NV neighborhood this summer (fide BA).

Fewer vagrant warblers than usual were also reported this summer. Warbler highlights included a singing male Northern Parula in Fallon, Churchill, NV 11 Jun (BH) and a Magnolia Warbler photographed at Corn Cr. 10 Jun (ph. RS). Up to 5 Grace's Warblers, including fledglings, were found n. of expected breeding areas at Price Canyon R.A., Carbon UT 29 Jun-2 Jul (EH, MMo, J&KB et al.). Female American Redstarts were observed 3 Jun at Miller's R.A. (GS) and 7 Jun at Parker Ranch Preserve, Nye, NV (LC). A Northern Waterthrush was at Wah Wah Valley Ranch, Beaver, UT 1 Jun (RF).

## SPARROWS THROUGH FINCHES

The only sparrow sighting of note was a White-throated Sparrow found 17 Jun at Corn Cr. (RS). A Common Grackle was photographed 1 Jun at the Wah Wah Valley Ranch, Beaver, UT (RF). One of the highlights of the period was a female Orchard Oriole photographed at a Central, Washington, UT residence (ph. LT). A male Hooded Oriole was observed n. of expected range in Salt Lake City, Salt Lake, UT 16 Jun (PF). Two pairs of White-winged Crossbills were observed at Beaver Mt., Cache, UT 14 Jul (RR et al.), and another pair was at Little Cottonwood Canyon, Salt Lake, UT 15-21 Jul (D&IM et al.). Higher-than-normal numbers of Evening Grosbeaks were reported from w. cen. Nevada, with a high count of 50 individuals near Spooner L., Douglas 31 Jul (MMe).

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